



Design and Access Statement and Planning Statement

Retrospective Householder Planning Application

Address: Holly Cottage, Cansiron Lane, Ashurst Wood, East Grinstead, West Sussex, RH19 3SF

Agent: Mr Daniel Barker

Date: 06/05/2025

1. Introduction

This statement supports a retrospective householder planning application to Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) for the construction of two concrete retaining walls within the rear garden of Holly Cottage, Ashurst Wood.

The works have been partially completed. Drawings illustrating the pre-existing, existing, and proposed conditions accompany this application.

Drawings Register

The following drawings are submitted in support of this application:

- **711 AL100** – Location and Block Plan
- **711 AL200** – Pre-Existing Plan
- **711 AL201** – Pre-Existing Sections
- **711 AL300** – Existing Plan
- **711 AL301** – Existing Sections
- **711 AL400** – Proposed Plan
- **711 AL401** – Proposed Sections
- **711 AL402** – Proposed Internal Elevations
- **711 AL403** – Proposed External Elevations

These drawings should be read in conjunction with the planting code key H1–H8 where applicable.

2. Site and Context

Holly Cottage is a detached bungalow with accommodation within the roof space, located on the southern side of Cansiron Lane, outside the built-up area boundary of Ashurst Wood. The property is situated within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), in a rural area of mainly detached dwellings.

The site is well screened by mature boundary vegetation and has a generous rear garden that slopes down to the south. The property has been extended previously.

3. Description of Development

The application seeks to regularise two concrete retaining walls within the rear garden:

- The southern retaining wall is approximately 36m from the house, runs 18m east–west, and is just under 2m in height.
 - The northern retaining wall is approximately 22m from the house, also runs 18m, and is approximately 1.6m high from original ground level.
 - A cut-and-fill approach has been used to form level ground between the two walls. The northern wall sits at original ground level, while the southern wall retains fill from the excavation.
 - The exposed concrete is proposed to be clad in untreated horizontal Siberian Larch battens (25mm x 90mm with 25mm gaps) designed to weather naturally to a silver-grey.
 - A biodiversity-led planting scheme, including native hedging and trees, will screen the structures and enhance ecological value. A full planting schedule is included in the submission.
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4. Planning History

- DM/24/0562 – Roof extension to form master bedroom with internal alterations – **Approved April 2024**
 - 10/00605/FUL – Single-storey front extension – **Approved April 2010**
 - 06/00094/FUL – Loft conversion with dormer – **Approved 2006**
 - 01/00166/FUL – Rear extension – **Approved March 2001**
 - GR/192/99 – Extensions and loft conversion – **Approved**
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5. Planning Policy Context

Relevant policies:

Mid Sussex District Plan 2014–2031:

- DP12 Protection and Enhancement of Countryside
- DP16 High Weald AONB
- DP26 Character and Design
- DP38 Biodiversity

Ashurst Wood Neighbourhood Plan (2016):

- ASW 1 Protection of the Countryside
- ASW 14 Design and Character

Other material considerations:

- High Weald AONB Management Plan (2019–2024)
 - National Planning Policy Framework (2023)
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6. Design and Impact Assessment

The retaining walls respond to the existing landform and are required to manage significant level changes. Once clad and planted, the structures will blend with the garden and maintain a domestic scale.

The finishes proposed are natural materials and a biodiversity-led approach, complementing the rural setting. The development supports continued use of the garden without introducing visual harm.

7. Impact on AONB and Countryside Setting

The property lies in the High Weald AONB. The works are entirely within the residential curtilage and well screened to the east and west. The southern boundary, which faces the countryside, will be mitigated through cladding and substantial new planting, significantly reducing visibility from off-site views.

The development as proposed will integrate with the landscape. It complies with the guidance of the High Weald AONB Management Plan and District Plan Policies DP12 and DP16.

8. Residential Amenity

There is no adverse impact on neighbouring amenity. The structures are set well within the site, screened by vegetation, and do not create overlooking, overshadowing, or overbearing effects.

9. Biodiversity and Proposed Planting Schedule

The proposal includes significant new planting using native species, enhancing biodiversity and habitat provision. Although the site is within a Great Crested Newt impact zone the majority of the garden to the south is within an Amber zone and no pond or breeding habitat has been disturbed.

The proposal aligns with District Plan Policy DP38 and results in a measurable net gain for biodiversity.

In support of this, a detailed planting schedule is proposed. The scheme comprises:

- **H1:** Mixed native species hedge (Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Guelder Rose, etc.), planted as pre-grown 1m knitted units, with a minimum of 8 species per 6m length.
- **H2:** Single-species Holly hedge for evergreen screening.
- **H3:** Hornbeam hedge in either pleached or natural form.
- **H4:** Mixed hedge (Holly, Hazel, Hawthorn, Bay, Laurel) for seasonal interest and screening.
- **H5:** Standard fruit trees (Apple, Pear, Cherry, Plum) planted in groups.
- **H6–H8:** Pleached fruit trees (Pear, Apricot, Fig) trained for wall planting.

The planting schedule supports biodiversity by offering food and shelter for birds, insects, and small mammals. Maintenance instructions include trench planting, mulching, seasonal trimming, and protection from browsing animals. Planting locations are clearly shown on the application drawings, marked with the corresponding planting codes (H1–H8).

Appendix: Planting Schedule

Code	Botanical Names (Mixed Species)	Common Names (Mix)	Size / Specification	Spacing	Quantity	Notes
H1	Crataegus monogyna, Prunus spinosa, Viburnum opulus, Viburnum lantana, Euonymus europaeus, Malus sylvestris, Ilex aquifolium, Corylus avellana, Acer campestre, Rhamnus cathartica	Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Guelder Rose, Wayfaring Tree, Spindle, Crab Apple, Holly, Hazel, Field Maple, Buckthorn	Pre-grown native instant hedge, 1m long knitted unit	1 unit/m	e.g. 25 units	Min. 8 species/6m. Supplied pre-formed and rooted. Continuous trench planting.
H2	Ilex aquifolium	Holly	Pre-grown native instant hedge, 1m long knitted unit	1 unit/m	e.g. 15 units	Single-species, dense evergreen hedge.
H3	Carpinus betulus	Hornbeam	Pre-grown native instant hedge, 1m long knitted unit	1 unit/m	e.g. 20 units	Pleached or natural form. Retains winter structure. Tolerant of heavy soils.
H4	Ilex aquifolium, Corylus avellana, Crataegus monogyna, Laurus nobilis, Prunus laurocerasus	Holly, Hazel, Hawthorn, Bay, Laurel	Pre-grown mixed instant hedge, 1m long knitted unit	1 unit/m	e.g. 12 units	Mixed evergreen and deciduous species for screening and habitat.
H5	Malus domestica, Pyrus communis, Prunus avium, Prunus domestica	Apple, Pear, Cherry, Plum	Standard fruit trees, 10–12 cm girth	As shown	4 trees	Group planting. Stake and guard.

Code	Botanical Names (Mixed Species)	Common Names (Mix)	Size / Specification	Spacing	Quantity	Notes
H6	Pyrus communis	Pleached Pear	Pleached, 12–14 cm girth, clear stem 1.8–2.0 m	As shown	e.g. 3 trees	Formal screening. Train to frame.
H7	Prunus armeniaca	Pleached Apricot	Pleached, 10–12 cm girth, clear stem 1.8 m	As shown	e.g. 3 trees	South-facing walls only. Protect from frost.
H8	Ficus carica	Pleached Fig	Pleached, 10–12 cm girth, trained form	As shown	e.g. 3 trees	Warm wall only. Prune to shape and enhance fruiting.

Planting & Aftercare Specification

- Wildlife benefit: screening, food and shelter
- Year-round interest: structure, berries, flowers
- Expected growth: 20–40 cm/year
- Maintain height: 1–4 metres
- Trench planting with topsoil, mulch, water thoroughly
- Trim in summer, prune in autumn; protect from browsing animals

10. Conclusion

The retrospective works at Holly Cottage are minor in scale, designed with sensitivity to context, and appropriately mitigated with cladding and ecological planting. They preserve and enhance the character of the AONB, do not affect neighbour amenity, and support the domestic use of the garden.

The proposal complies with the relevant planning policies and guidance, and we respectfully request that retrospective planning permission be granted.

Author:

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06/05/2025